

EASTERN IFCA UPDATE

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ



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Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority have taken a flexible, adaptive and responsive approach to the management of potting activities within Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone, known as Adaptive Risk Management. This is an evolving process where research and management constantly inform each other.

The Adaptive Risk Management approach was taken after receiving updated advice from Natural England which stated that potting can damage raised, outcropping chalk, and that this damage could hinder the achievement of the Conservation Objectives for the Marine Conservation Zone.

The research and management aspects of the Adaptive Risk Management process are being developed by two Task and Finish Groups ('Research and Development' and 'Management'), bringing academics, fishermen, conservation interests and other key advisors together in a partnership approach.

This update contains the latest information about the ongoing research and management work being undertaken by Eastern IFCA, our partners, and stakeholders.

MANAGEMENT NEWS

EASTERN IFCA FORMAL CONSULTATION EXTENSION: CROMER SHOAL CHALK BEDS BYELAW 2023

Eastern IFCA officers have carefully reviewed and considered responses to an extensive two-phased informal consultation on the development of a byelaw to manage the potting fisheries in the MCZ. A draft byelaw was made and approved by the Authority for formal consultation.

Copies of the draft byelaw and a draft impact assessment are available through the Eastern IFCA website where you can also find more information on how stakeholder responses have helped to shape the byelaw and answers to some frequently asked questions: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/eastern-ifca-formal-consultation-cromer-shoal-chalk-beds-byelaw-2023-crab-and-lobster-byelaw-2023/>



We have decided to extend the deadline for comments to midday on **Wednesday 31st May 2023**

A discussion on the byelaw will be included in the agenda for the coming **stakeholder group meeting** with the intention of gathering your views

Hard copies can be provided on request using the contact details below.

What's in the byelaw?

For a summary of what's included in the byelaw, please see our formal consultation infographic on the next page.

How to respond:

The Authority intends to apply to the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the confirmation of the byelaws following a consideration of responses received.

As this is a formal consultation, responses need to be in writing to the CEO of Eastern IFCA at:

Eastern IFCA, 6 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, PE30 2JG.

Email: mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk Tel: 01553 775321

Additionally, a copy of your response needs to be sent to the Marine Management Organisation:

Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team, Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team, Marine Management Organisation, Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE4 7HY. Email: IFCabyelaws@marinemanagement.org.uk

A word of thanks:

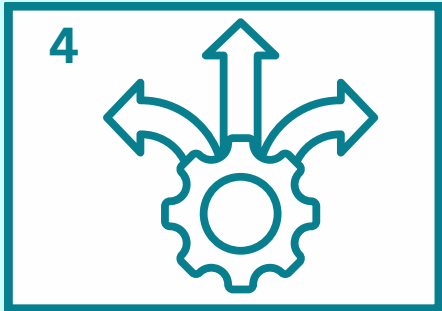
We are grateful to all stakeholders for your continued engagement and input into consultations. We are aware that there have been extensive consultations over recent years and that this can result in frustration and fatigue. Your feedback has helped to directly shape our management approach and the wording of the draft byelaw. For more information on how, you can read the consultation outcome reports available through our website or in hard copy on request.

Formal Consultation: Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023

This byelaw has been made and approved by the Authority for formal consultation. **Closing date: midday, Wednesday 31st May 2023**

What's included:

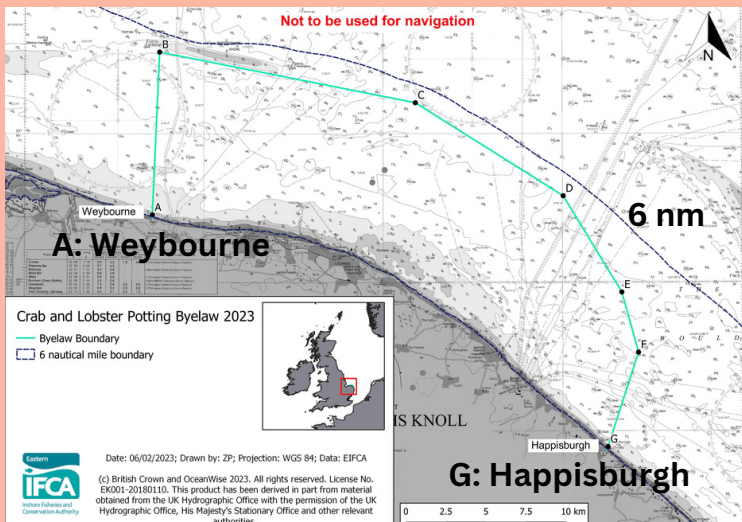
<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Permits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Recreational 	<p>Marking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pot tags • Surface markers 	<p>Recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own gear • At sea/ ashore



Flexible measures

The Authority may attach conditions, endorsements or eligibility policy to permits - as identified over time through research and consultation

Where:



MCZ designated area + inshore 200m area (from the low water mark to the start of the designation)



- To help with admin, logistics & enforcement
- To ensure all recreational activity is covered
- To ensure clarity for stakeholders
- To ensure the byelaw is future-proof



Safeguards for industry included: business continuity, young entrants, ability to finance into the future



Other measures like inshore vessel restrictions and winter closures will be considered over time and through further consultation with stakeholders



Scan the QR code to the left or go to our website for the full text of the draft byelaw and Impact Assessment and details on **how to respond**.

CRAB & LOBSTER FESTIVAL 2023 - WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

We are pleased to announce that Eastern IFCA and Natural England will be attending the Crab & Lobster Festival on Sunday 21st May at Cromer this year. Our stall will showcase research and information on the Adaptive Risk Management approach, and officers will be on site to answer questions and discuss the formal consultation on the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023. We hope to see you there!



EASTERN IFCA-NATURAL ENGLAND JOINT POSITION STATEMENT: MANAGEMENT OF THE POTTING FISHERY IN THE MCZ

Eastern IFCA completed an updated assessment of potting activities last year and submitted this to Natural England in April 2022. The assessment concluded that:

- 1 Potting is not currently hindering the MCZ's conservation objectives but risk to rugged chalk features cannot be ruled out in the long term; and**
- 2 Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) offers suitable mitigation for managing risk.**

Eastern IFCA received formal advice from Natural England on the updated assessment in January 2023. In this latest advice, Natural England agree with Eastern IFCA's conclusion that potting is not currently hindering the MCZ's conservation objectives but request a more detailed, long-term plan setting out how ARM will be applied in the site before Natural England can agree that ARM will suitably mitigate risk.

Eastern IFCA and Natural England have agreed and published a Joint Statement outlining our joint position on Natural England's latest advice. The Joint Statement is available on the Eastern IFCA website or in hard copy on request: https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023_03_28 EIFCA_NE_Position_statement_FINAL.pdf

What next?

Eastern IFCA officers are finalising a draft of the ARM Plan which will be published following feedback from Natural England. The plan sets out a long-term approach for risk management under the ARM framework, including projected timescales in relation to key research, how research will inform management and how the effectiveness of measures will be monitored and adapted.

Officers are also compiling an Interim Research Report which summarises the research work that has been led and developed by the Research and Development Task and Finish Group to address the uncertainties and knowledge gaps identified in the assessment.

YOUR HELP NEEDED - POT TAGS THAT WORK FOR FISHERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We are applying for funding to test and roll-out pot tags for fishermen working in the MCZ. As part of this, we are developing a feasibility study to test different pot tags to find the best ones for fishers working in the MCZ. As requested by stakeholders we want to identify tags that are durable and that work for fishers and the environment.

The trial will look at different tag types and assess them based on their durability, cost, and practicality. Additionally, we will trial tags with Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) technology which have the potential to support research and monitoring work as part of Adaptive Risk Management.



Become a trial participant:

We are looking for fishing industry volunteers interested in participating in the trial. If you are interested, please let one of our IFCOs on the coast know or get in touch with us by calling (01553) 775321 or 07385 769305, or by emailing us at mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk



Help us find the right tags:

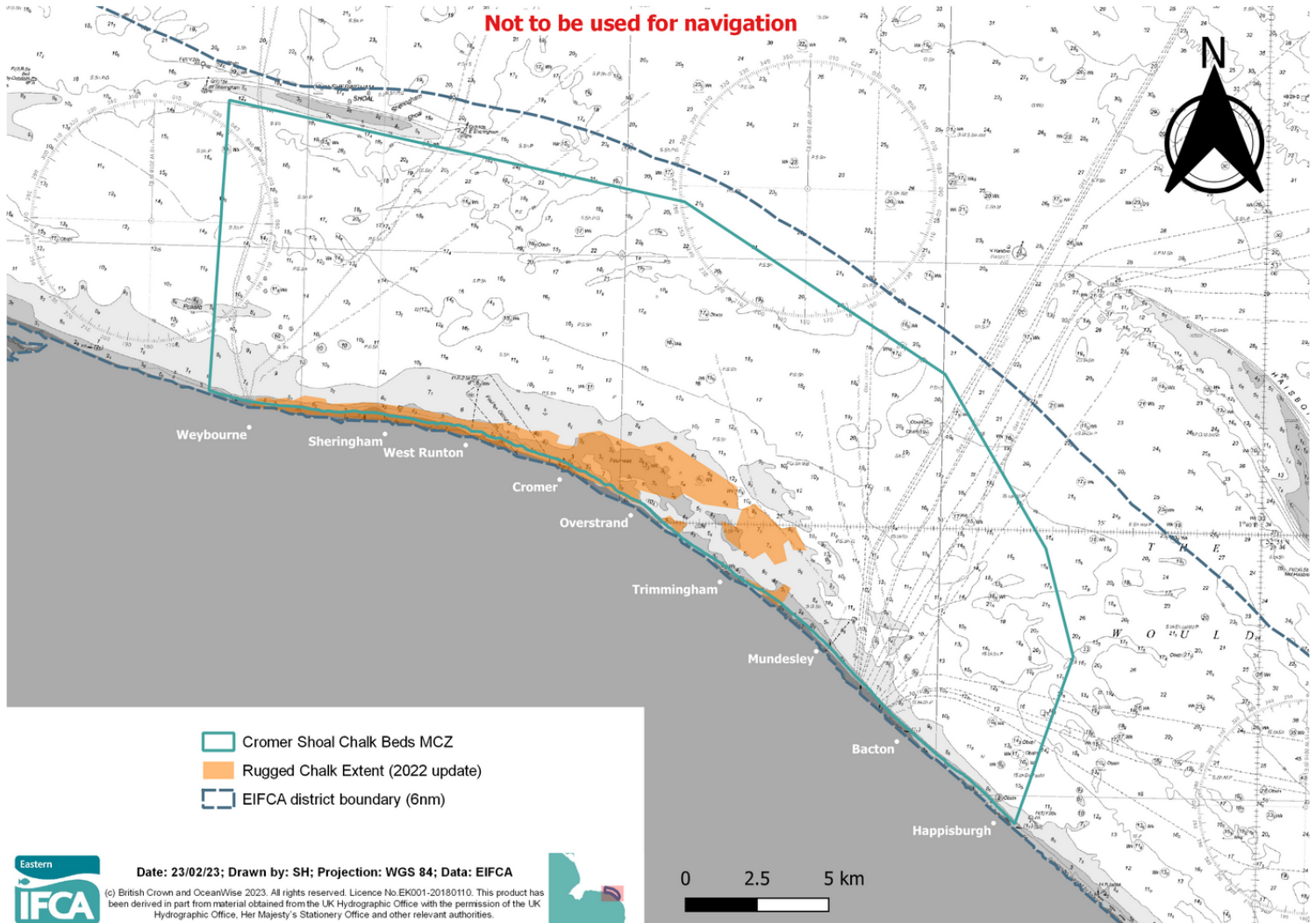
We are also looking for suggestions on tags to include in the trial. Please get in touch using the contact details above if you have a recommendation or other ideas for us to consider. We would also like to hear from you if you have any knowledge of PIT technology and suppliers in the UK.

This work is made possible with the help of our friends at the East of England Plastics Coalition, and the support of the World Wildlife Fund.

RESEARCH NEWS

2022 RUGGED CHALK REVIEW AND INTERACTIVE MAPS NOW AVAILABLE

At the end of 2022, Eastern IFCA officers completed a review of the extent of the rugged chalk in Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. The review incorporated all new data sources which were available at that time. The revised rugged chalk map is displayed below:



This is not our final assessment of the rugged chalk area, but an updated version based on the new data that we have collected or sourced since previously mapping the rugged chalk in 2020. The collection of habitat data to inform the rugged chalk extent is ongoing and the rugged chalk extent will be reviewed again in 2023 to incorporate any further sources of habitat data which have since been made available or arise during the upcoming year.

This review and the updated rugged chalk extent has been developed with feedback from the Research and Development Task & Finish Group, the Evidence Review Group and fishing industry representatives. Any further feedback is welcome and will be considered in the next review.

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Please visit the Eastern IFCA website to read the full rugged chalk review report: https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023_04_Rugged_chalk_extent_review_FINAL.pdf


You can also download our interactive maps of the 2022 rugged chalk review, here: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/cromer-shoal-chalk-beds-mcz-update-2022-rugged-chalk-review-and-interactive-maps-now-available/>

The maps allow you to add and remove layers to see how different evidence and information has fed into the review, but please note, this feature may not work on mobile phones.


RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS




Video footage collected during the 2022 ROV surveys is currently being analysed externally by Envision Mapping (funded by NE) to assess habitat and benthic communities and internally to assess potting impacts. A final report is due in April.




The Research and Development Task and Finish Group have been working with Blue Marine Foundation to develop a study which assesses the impacts that potting activities have on the degradation of chalk features and compares it to that which occurs naturally. This will be a collaborative three-year study utilising 3d photogrammetry techniques, high resolution multibeam and seabed video footage to assess and quantify structural changes to habitat over time. The study will involve closing areas to potting and other recreational activities on a voluntary basis, and subsequently requires industry and stakeholder support. The group are currently finalising a proposal for the work so that funding applications can be progressed.



The planned adaptive gear trials, aimed at testing the effectiveness of soft-armouring on pots and floats on the drop lines for reducing impacts on the sensitive chalk features, have been temporarily put on hold so that resource can be prioritised towards developing the natural disturbance study.



15 trackers distributed across the fleet and officers are continuing to collect valuable spatial data on activities from these units. Eastern IFCA currently have a full year's worth of data which is in the process of being analysed and will be presented in the ARM Interim Report. Officers are also exploring ways that pot buoy counts can be used to provide information on potting densities, either through using drones or conduction counts from shore or a vessel, but also to provide a mechanism for monitoring activity levels and the uptake of the Code of Best Practice.



Officers plan to recommence onboard bio sampling in May to continue data collection to support Eastern IFCA's chalk value study and are currently developing a method to incorporate meat yields into the assessment.

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The Project Board have agreed for the Marine Conservation Society to complete a social value study for the crab and lobster fishery in the context of the MCZ using existing data sources, whilst it was hoped that a final report would be expected by the end of March 2023, this project has been delayed due to the lead officer changing roles.

MCZ STAKEHOLDER GROUP

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR NEXT MEETING

The next MCZ Stakeholder Group meeting is confirmed to take place on **Wednesday 31st May 2023 from 6pm to 8pm on Zoom**. The meeting will cover updates since the last meeting and research and management plans for the summer.



About the MCZ Stakeholder Group:

The Stakeholder Group is for everyone who has an interest in the fisheries management deliberations at the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. It is coordinated by the Marine Conservation Society's Agents of Change project, which is co-funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the LIFE programme of the European Union. The Agents of Change project aims to help increase community connection and inclusion in local decision making, to support management outcomes that work for society and sea.

If you are interested to know more, or to join the Stakeholder Group, please contact Alice Tebb at alice.tebb@mcsuk.org or on **07422 965 027**.

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